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## Evaluating Military Ethics Education: Common Values, Specific Contexts

George R. Wilkes

A range of militaries have forged new approaches to military ethics education, and as part of this they have also explored a variety of forms of evaluation of their ethics education provision. One of the most obvious factors behind the pressure to evaluate ethics provision more rigorously has been the high risk of public ethics failures in respect of effective force projection in peacekeeping and counter-insurgency operations. These new risks place a demand upon military institutions to show that their educational reforms produce calculating military professionals leading military units which are fully prepared to act with the necessary professionalism.

Debate over the reasons for militaries to evaluate their ethics education with care is as old as the modern military academy (an exceptionally useful multi-national source for this being Barnard 1872). The reforms to military education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created vibrant debates about the use of multiple means for evaluating the effectiveness of military vocational development: written exams, oral exams, evaluation by teachers able to capture the stature of an individual more fairly and exactly, and evaluation by a variety of examination boards - some internal to the military, some external - designed to ensure objectivity, competition and the rigorous application of high standards. New military challenges or crises returned the armed forces of European and North American states to the expectation with which military academies were forged: the formation of capable military professionals able to surmount the social and institutional limitations responsible for defeat in war. Militaries developed sophisticated examination systems geared to the promotion of quality officers and NCOs. The assumption that moral qualities could be inculcated through personal relationships with instructors, through corps discipline and through the teaching of other subjects meant that attention to moral qualities was an elusive feature of these examination reforms. Nevertheless, assumptions about ethics were also evident in many parts of the curriculum, and in attempts to make examination more rigorous and more effective as an instrument for overcoming social or institutional problems associated with poor quality amongst the students graduating from the academies (Barnard 1872).

The present contribution underlines how greatly evaluation techniques appropriate to assessing 'ethical preparedness' as a feature of overall force projection may differ from techniques more appropriate to assessing the development of ethical frameworks for the individual military professional.

The essay is divided into three parts. The first part examines the application of different evaluation tools: more subjective, personal evaluation by teachers personally familiar with their students to assist in vocational development, more collective or objective means, including external reviews, to address the high risks of massive ethical and public relations failures in the field. Those closely involved in evaluating ethics education are commonly involved in both,

conscious of the different pressures involved in attempting to test vocational and situational 'preparedness'.

The second part extends this examination through a reflection on the different approaches to vocational and situational preparedness taken across military ethics and ethics education programmes. Whereas a comparable set of values can be shown to be deployed in military ethics teaching across many NATO militaries (see, e.g., Robinson, de Lee and Carrick 2008, 5-7), the contexts for ethics classes differ within and between national militaries in a number of respects. This prompts divergent approaches to assessment of both the situational and vocational dimensions of ethics education.

A final section examines challenges encountered in the process of evaluating ethics education. Here, the paper examines arguments for pursuing different options for evaluation in the face of factors which make evaluation of ethical preparedness particularly difficult. The paper concludes with reflections on the interests, challenges and opportunities involved in focusing either on teacher or on external evaluations, or alternatively in combining the different examination resources.

### **1 Tools for Evaluation: Universal Principles and Standards, Unique Students, and Meaningful Feedback**

Evaluation as a technical activity spans from the utilitarian and quantitative to the reflective and interactive. The former is an unavoidable feature of military education, reflecting the interests of the institutions which provide resources and which demand effective results from the military's perspective. These institutions place a 'top-down' pressure for evaluation and reform, and choices of evaluative frameworks naturally follow from this. The more reflective, interactive mode of evaluation lies at the conceptual heart of ethics education as a vocation. While it is far from ignored in recent moves to use ethics programming to bolster military effectiveness, this more subjective mode of evaluation demands different techniques which correspond to different notions of effectiveness. The time available for evaluation work in military academies is limited, but the pressure to deliver quality graduates adequately prepared has meant improving evaluation techniques has been a recurrent agenda item throughout the history of modern military education. The instructor looking through the material presented by educational reform commissions in the mid-nineteenth century will find much that is familiar (Barnard 1872).

High risks follow from ethical failures in military life, encouraging some militaries to expend increasing time and resources on innovative systems of ethics evaluation. These systematic approaches to evaluation of ethical preparedness across military units involve new evaluation resources which may be designed on a scale much larger than the set of evaluation opportunities or resources available to the staff dedicated to ethics provision in military education institutions. The design of these new systems varies greatly, with the choice of internal or external evaluators presenting one of the key variables that affect evaluation outcomes. In this section, we review methods used in

evaluation, beginning with tools available to internal evaluators and moving to external evaluators. It may be seen that the choice of categorising evaluators in this fashion already reflects an awareness of the importance of the subjective dimension to evaluation processes. In the three parts of the essay that follow, it will be seen that the relationship constructed between internal and external evaluators is of critical interest.

The formative relationship on which contemporary military ethics education rests is that between educator and student. The educator models the ethical demands placed on members of the military, according to their place in the hierarchy and according to the situations they are likely to face. At most levels, this is likely to involve reflection on principles and cases. Classroom time may be supplemented by field trips or guest lectures. None of the details covered matter more than the relationship between educator – who students must find a credible representative of military norms that make actual sense in the field – and students, whose diversity and engagement with the subject educators will either fail to grasp or be able to work with. A more deliberately personal or more deliberately democratic teaching style may reflect a recognition of the importance of student diversity and student engagement with the subject matter and with the teacher. There is a further component that will arise in evaluation exercises. Whether or not the teaching style is deliberately focused on relationship building and participation, a further subjective component in course design rests on the ability of an educator or educators to present a programme which students find compelling enough to act upon when it becomes relevant.

A formative relationship demands an approach to evaluation of its own kind. Attempts to understand the quality or impact of this relationship through external evaluation after a class or after a course cannot wholly replace the subjective evaluations of those involved in the classroom. In practice, the most natural resource for regular evaluation is the instructor, whose time for evaluation is generally, and sometimes severely, constrained. Instructors may be able to accommodate time for individual exchanges with students in class or outside class, enabling a degree of directed discussion aimed at unearthing the subjective elements which affect student learning. Student evaluation is secured in many educational systems through reporting to third parties – classically achieved through feedback forms as courses near their end. In recent decades, more innovative approaches have begun to complement these opportunities, more time-consuming but also more integrated into curriculum design and more deliberately formed in relation to learning strategies. The course experience may be described through anonymised teacher and student journals. The anonymous journal format allows for fuller accounts of the reflective and subjective dimensions to ethics classes, requiring a deliberate choice and time commitment by educators where it is not established as the norm. It provides a fuller evidence base than feedback forms delivered at the end of a course. Oral exchanges, journals and other forms of reporting can be included in a formalised process of formative assessment of students, helping instructor and student to discuss progress and continuing challenges. Evidence of the performance of instructors may be achieved through third party review – an in-class peer review, or assessment by external evaluators. Each part of this assessment is time-

consuming, and many institutions adopt only a part of each component in evaluating the effectiveness of educational provision.

In common with other classes in the academy or training context, ethics provision is commonly tested by a formal end-of-course examination, in some systems supplemented by mid-term exams or written papers. In some systems, examination is written, in some oral. These may be pass-fail tests of the retention of knowledge, delivered as formative exercises during an ethics course for NCOs, or at the conclusion of the course. Where exams test the ability to solve problems or to cast light on the dilemmas involved in difficult cases, institutions will commonly demand or reward right reasoning, which conforms with institutional expectations and justifies effective responses relevant to situations that may be faced in subsequent service. Classes at most levels will nevertheless also involve reflection on unclear situations, where moral capacity is measured not in terms of right answers, but in more imperfect terms. Exams can accommodate this, with the caveat that educators will recognise the difficulties presented in assessing moral capacity. Firstly, there are subjective elements. Where ethics is mainstreamed into other courses, as part of an air power class, for instance, then the subjective dimensions to the ethics component may be judged quite differently by examiners who have technical, kinetic, or broader ethical specialisms. Secondly, candidates may anticipate 'right' responses, preventing examiners from accessing the subjective dimensions which an individual may view as their own real view, or as the unstated, politically incorrect view of the force to which they belong. Examinations conducted in the academy are not straightforwardly reliable indicators for subsequently reactions or conduct in the field, under fire, or in the heat of the moment.

Nevertheless, in military academies across the world, examinations are normally taken to be essential features in assessing candidate development. They provide quantitative and qualitative information that is readily available and naturally interpreted as evidence of the effectiveness of ethics provision.

Academy graduates will commonly encounter ethical dimensions to preparedness reviews, and in a growing number of militaries this ethical component is treated deliberately. Reviewers are generally external to a unit under review, though not necessarily, nor are they necessarily unfamiliar with the particular educational preparation, traditions, or spirit of the unit they are reviewing. Since reviews in preparation for specific missions and regular preparedness reviews (often annual) are designed specifically to measure a variety of aspects of military effectiveness, a problem-solving, utilitarian or consequentialist ethical framework is natural. Reviewers may expect right answers, and questions may focus on correct retention of doctrine or other essential information rather than on subjective factors. Nevertheless, there may also be scope for more personal elements to ethics reviews, both in testing individuals and in assessing the quality of relationships across a unit. This is of central importance in regular Canadian ethical preparedness reviews, coordinated by the Defence Ethics Programme, whose reports are online (see bibliography). Preparedness reviews can present an especially effective vehicle for embedding ethical expectations in military units during service, and not only

in training. There is an obvious advantage in integrating the evaluation of ethical preparedness into the unit's mission focus, whether in reviews conducted on a regular basis or in pre-deployment scenarios, at which point evaluations can be targeted to risks and demands likely to be faced in the field.

The military expecting to face challenges to ethical preparedness may additionally establish feedback mechanisms operational throughout a unit's service, on base and in the field. Again, Canada has led the way in formalising a confidential feedback channel, able to produce evidence of ethical challenges and dilemmas which are viewed differently by commanding officers and members of a unit serving under them. The expectation that this system would prove to be supported by commanding officers and trusted by complainants has nevertheless been challenged by revelations of the breadth of unreported sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces in 2013, for which a separate and independent reporting mechanism was then established. In other militaries, chaplains may informally perform a comparable role, where their position outside a unit hierarchy and their ability to guarantee confidentiality makes them an obvious resort for soldiers. As long as they are trusted, their role as ethical safety valves can increase further in units where they are also close to commanding officers. Whatever its form, a confidential channel of this nature promises information about potential and actual breaches with a distinctive mix of objective and subjective dimensions. It reaches into social realms which examinations broach obliquely at best. It may open up assumptions about the real or practical ethical norms that are not taught in the academy, and will reveal different forms of qualitative information about ethical issues associated with relationships within units, relationships with outsiders, and relationships with civilian family members. The channel through which information comes matters for parties interested in questions about the potential it holds for releasing subjective and selective information.

Evaluations by researchers – sociologists, psychologists, educational researchers – may complement these internal evaluation mechanisms in various respects. Again, there are many potential challenges in working with their findings. As external evaluators, researchers may be able to publicly identify the strengths of ethics education with a different form of credibility. They may also be able to produce meaningful comparisons with other militaries or other professional services. The first challenge for external evaluations by researchers is enabling effective access, in terms of time spent with research subjects, and in terms of the quality of researchers' interaction with serving members of the military. Researchers working within military institutions may overcome some of the barriers to mutual understanding, while external researchers offer fresh perspectives. In either case, the researcher-student relationship can produce different forms of qualitative and subjective evaluation than the purposive evaluations achieved within the military education and preparedness evaluation systems. Whereas educators and officers will have a natural interest in the progress of students towards military standards, researchers have a natural interest in exploring the impact of pre-military or extra-military life on subject's reception of ethics teaching.

The ability of researchers to gain the trust of members of the military is a crucial factor in their ability to capture attitudes to ethical norms and educational forms that may be intentionally hidden from instructors and officers, or not fed into the military's own evaluation systems. Two intriguing examples are to the point. An Israeli researcher spent her military service as a psychological support officer for soldiers undertaking a tour of duty in Gaza during their military service (published as Elizur and Yishay-Krien 2009). On the basis of their evidently frank conversations, she was later able to report not only on the nature and reported causes of infractions of ethical standards 'in the field', but also identified factors which singled out the two members of the unit who had refused to participate in unbecoming conduct: these two were older, having been to university, and they also appeared to be the only two members of the unit who received regular communications from their families. A senior Canadian forces researcher, Lisa Noonan, interviewed members of the Canadian Military Police, and was trusted with a range of comments which indicated that a significant proportion of interviewees believed that the real but necessarily hidden ethos of the service was far more socially conservative than the politically correct version which had to be given over in training and in statements by officers (Noonan 2006).

Internal evaluation systems produce effects on members of the military which external evaluators cannot. They can enable a data set to build up which enables a military to assess the appropriateness of ethics instruction and reinforcement after training ends, which can evaluate existing strengths and which can indicate areas for improvement. To the extent that external reviewers involve cost and risk, they may not be deliberately sought out in building up evidence for the quality of ethics education. In many countries, external reviews have nevertheless been an integral feature of military academy education since the nineteenth century (Barnard 1872). Militaries continue to have a natural interest in external evidence that they are performing well in this sphere, as in others, and particularly in contexts in which highly public ethics breaches have led to demand for publicly available evidence that problems have been addressed. The next section addresses these contexts and the responses they have produced in military ethics education programmes.

## **2 Contexts which demand customised evaluation**

The urgency with which ethics education is formed and evaluated to respond to new developments is a source of strength as well as a reason for careful evaluation. New environments focus ethics provision on widely perceived realities, they bring new arguments about concrete challenges and consequences to bear, and they bring the force of institutions behind the drive to promote ethical behaviour and standards. The institutional, consequentialist and individual frameworks for thinking about ethical commitments work on different conceptual levels and in practice require a negotiation between purposive and qualitative programming and evaluation.

Ethics programmes are customised in all manner of ways in order to maximise their effectiveness and their utility. Curricula can at most give limited time for military ethics as a subject in its own right. Courses, stand-alone classes or events are therefore tailored to have an impact on course participants in proportion to the seriousness of the subject, and in proportion to the public expectation placed on militaries to display their respect for ethical norms. Visits to institutions focused on past genocides, for instance, are chosen by some military educators on both sides of the Atlantic for the clarity with which they impress upon members of the forces the consequences of a departure from universal moral norms and international law (for tailored courses partnered with the US Holocaust Museum, see USHMM in the bibliography). Ethics material and methods are introduced into doctrine classes and other courses in military academies, both as a deliberate attempt at mainstreaming the subject and also in lieu of dedicated ethics classes in academies in which the field is not yet accepted as a priority for officer cadets and other cohorts. The diffusion of case studies and of the teaching of frameworks for ethical reflection throughout the curriculum raises the profile of ethics within the curriculum. It affirms that a military aspires to become a thinking and a learning institution, with ethics seen as a rich source of intellectual challenge and as a source of motivation for individual initiative. At the same time, mainstreaming ethics makes it more difficult to evaluate. Each of these purposive steps can also present a complication for attempts to evaluate ethical learning in qualitative terms.

Giving ethics the weight it is due primarily in functional terms has consequences for any military which seeks to ascertain how effective or useful ethics education can be: it gives evaluators direction, while also creating pressures to depart from an ethics programme focused on resistance to purely functional calculation about values, behaviour and qualitative relationships. This is evident from the militaries which have the most elaborate ethics education programmes, such as the Canadian and Singaporean armed forces (see, e.g. Lew 2008). In both Canada and Singapore, the evaluation of the effectiveness of ethics programming has been driven by annual ethical preparedness reporting at commanding officer and unit level. In armed forces for whom dedicated military ethics programming is a newer demand, annual military preparedness checks are sometimes the primary opportunity for introducing an explicit ethics component into the fabric of military life. A full preparedness reporting mechanism can be a significant motor for change in the development of a culture of ethical reflection. The



preparedness framework underlines the functionality of a sophisticated commitment to military ethics. By the same token, an effective annual ethical preparedness programme can prove to be a motor for a relatively narrow approach to what is conceived as being 'practical' about ethics in the military. A preparedness initiative classically rewards conformity rather than reflective engagement. The pressure to avoid the ultimate sanction of failure in a preparedness exercise can helpfully motivate attention to the prohibitions of international law. It is less helpful for the drive to promote an ethical awareness which applies to situations where those legal prohibitions are silent or inadequate. To extend preparedness monitoring to encompass ethical calculation means both evaluator and evaluated working against the grain of this core feature of the assessment exercise. It is by no means impossible, but it does require deliberate attention.

Asymmetric theatres and various forms of policing strategies in managing conflict and post-conflict situations have encouraged further demands for a more functional military ethics education programme across NATO (Carrick, Connelly and Robinson 2013) and beyond it (Gross 2014). The result is the creation of tailored programming which may coexist in different ways with courses designed around the teaching of core values, philosophical ethical frameworks and case studies. The special demands of policing missions encourage the development of new ethics programming focused on calculating consequences, often delivered as part of intensive pre-deployment courses, often at battalion level and also for much smaller specialist circles, for medics or for chaplains, for instance. In the past decade, peace-keeping experience has encouraged some military academies (in Austria, Croatia, and Slovenia, for instance) to seek to combine ethics preparation with cultural awareness instruction, both as a reinforcement to teaching about the treatment of the local population and insurgents, and as a support to soldiers working in a multinational context, and whose cross-cultural experience may be minimal. Pre-deployment courses may be of critical importance to the coordination of teaching about the ethics-related components of the doctrine used in multi-national missions, whether there is an agreed set of rules for engagement or the forces have to learn how their competing approaches to ethics relate to divergent rules of engagement. Such courses would need to be extensive in order to foster a renewed capacity for ethical reflection where this has not already been the subject of substantial work beforehand. Evaluating the delivery of pre-deployment ethics instruction against the purposes for which it is instituted is not a simple matter of listing and checking the acknowledgement of key ethical constraints or objectives in the field.

Professional military ethics educators are accustomed to course objectives designed to entrench a sense of ethical imperatives at a deeper level, framed by the values of the military. This is the case whether the context is a course for senior commanders or for new recruits undergoing basic training. This values- or identity-based approach to ethics teaching suggests a coherent set of learning outcomes which are easily appraised. There are, however, complications for the evaluator. Ethics courses at both of these levels commonly explore the potential for tension between an ethics based on the soldier's professional identity and the

pressure to adopt a primarily functional approach to what is practical. A values-based approach, or an identity-based approach, to teaching (what is presented as) the fundamentals of ethical thinking and practice entails further problems for assessing what is in fact practical. The evaluator is confronted with a host of questions which may reveal the contrasting intellectual or ideological perspectives at stake in defining an ethical practice in the military. Answers to the question ‘what is really practical here?’ will first of all differ according to the identity or set of values or virtues that is chosen to represent the firm basis on which a soldier’s ethics is formed. Across NATO, as the studies of the Military Ethics Education Network have shown, there is a common enough list of virtues associated with professional conduct (Robinson, de Lee and Carrick 2008, 5-7), but there is also a wide divergence over the nature of the military’s professional identity and values.

In many academies, the basis for the military’s ethical commitments lies in national values, even those these may be the subject of heated dispute across the population. Canada’s ethics programming is clearly designed to recreate the public image of the military as a force for good, while the Singaporean Armed Forces have deliberately set out to use ethics teaching to promote the virtues of a unified national identity, with an eye on the diversity of the country’s population. In Singapore, and in Indonesia, an avowedly secular approach to military ethics is seen as unifying, and this may also be said of a number of Asian, African and European militaries.

By contrast, in many post-totalitarian militaries the relationship between secular and religious ethics is the subject of a highly politicised dispute. In some cases, the development of a core ethics component to military education may appear to have suffered as a result of this, if not also because of other obstacles to its inclusion in the curriculum. For some armed forces formed in situations of recent or ongoing internal conflict, the very premise of a coherent approach to professional military ethics lies not only in an assertion of values shared with civilians but also in the separation between the military and society. The promise of a non-political military ethic is not a cure-all for militaries seeking to circumvent domestic political division. It does not do away with the potential for controversy over what constitutes the distinctive practical duty of the soldier: witness the controversy over the warrior ethic which has been evident within the US military academies, entirely based on contrasting perspectives to effective military practice (Olsthoorn 2011 gives a glimpse into the debate, see esp. p. 269).

Disputes over the nature of military ethics pit liberal approaches to the use of force against their critics, and universalist frameworks for justifying military action against more determinedly nation-centred or force protection-centred narratives. This is not an abstract or theoretical discussion. As is clear in a number of militaries, different sectors of the forces and the academies associated with them – the Marine Corps University in the US, for instance, and the Naval Academy – understand their professional ethic in different ways, and this is easily understood in ideological terms, not simply in terms of different functions or traditions. Similarly, at ground level, battalions, regiments and their

commanding officers understand their professional ethic in light of different traditions of service and different approaches to military objectives. These, too, can easily appear to conform to different ideological perspectives when military performance in Afghanistan, or Iraq, is the focus of a service-wide debate. Evaluating the delivery of values-based ethics programming is, as a result, not as simple as the decision to place values at the heart of army identity or education. Aware of the political or ideological stakes associated with ethical performance, course participants may conceal their personal resistance to new forms of military ethics programming, as we have seen was indicated in Noonan's survey work in the Canadian Military Police. A host of factors conspire to complicate the delivery of values-based ethics instruction, and in response evaluators must account for not simply the learning of core principles but also for a much more difficult process of relating these abstract notions to the practice of the military profession. Talk to the educator teaching core values to the ranks and the challenges of conveying the consequences of these values will quickly become clear.

### **3 Designing processes for effective, complex evaluations**

The first consequence of these practical challenges is that decisions about evaluation procedures can be sensitive and complicated, the second is that the benefits of deliberate attention to evaluation can be overlooked.

In Singapore and Canada, elaborate forms of ongoing evaluation have been introduced with the aim of being able to assess the effective absorption of ethics education. Such elaborate structured evaluation mechanisms are not under consideration in many militaries, where the rationales given for new forms of evaluation have not penetrated educational institutions. Without institutional support, few educators will have time for formal approaches to evaluation, if by formal evaluation we mean the vagaries of feedback forms, peer review or other forms of reporting and course assessment. Instead, many militaries assess ethics education primarily by exam and as part of preparedness interviews with commanding officers. These various forms of assessment are also designed to help course providers to answer the question, has this course in ethics been effective? The question we will address now is: are these modes of evaluation really sufficient for the delivery of effective ethics instruction?

The Canadian armed forces have a much more developed evaluation process than most militaries because these traditional forms of assessment appear in a Canadian context to be of limited value in judging effectiveness in two respects. Both are influenced by Canada's experience of highly public ethics failures during peace operations. Firstly, it is deemed not to be enough to ask an officer to report on their own ethical commitments because so much depends in a military unit on the officer's relationships with colleagues and subordinates. The ethical preparedness review is therefore designed to help to ensure that the military conforms to the norms expected of a democratic armed force, encompassing relationships built on accountability and to some degree transparency (Canadian Armed Forces Defence Ethics Programme). The Canadian ethical review allows an evaluation based on information about the

context in which an officer works, with careful provision of confidential reporting of inappropriate behaviour. Effectiveness here is judged in relation to the prospect of serious ethical failures and also by the needs of a military unit.

Secondly, traditional examination procedures were evidently insufficient as tools for promoting ethics at an institutional level. Traditional examination, whether written or oral, encourages officers and officer cadets to report the answers which they know are expected, rather than to reflect on their own practices or their sense of moral development. The Canadian armed forces sought to put in place a more elaborate ethical preparedness system aware of the intense pressure within the forces to place greater reliance upon unit loyalties than on loyalty to norms for the protection of enemy combatants, civilians or individual members of the unit. At present, the resistance of members of the Canadian armed forces to use the new reporting systems is a matter of open public debate.

Evaluation of ethical preparedness in this collective sense, and of the realities which encourage departures from the values expressly identified with the armed forces, is not only an operation for instructors - nor only for the force's ethics teams and preparedness evaluators - it also lies in the realm of the social scientist or social psychologist. This requires the deliberate direction of research funds and manpower in support of the development of ethics education in the military: it is much less evident than the high risk nature of ethics failures might suggest would be natural; but unsurprising in a climate in which military budgets are constrained, cut, or undergoing reconfiguration to pay for new technological developments. A small number of useful studies have been directed to attitudes to ethics provision in militaries in Europe and North America. We do not have many studies which give an account of the effectiveness of particular forms of ethics teaching. It may therefore be the case, for instance, as far as we know, that at present there may be many ethics teachers who assume the teaching of core values to be the most appropriate educating tool for new recruits, while others assume this to be too abstract to make an effective impact on student's behaviour. Nor have ethics studies been published which relate learning to subsequent field experience, nor to post-deployment well-being (though PTSD studies, notably in the USA, have made links that demand further attention). Finally, further studies on the impact of an individual's prior experience and education would be of enormous importance for the evaluation of the effectiveness of ethics programming in the military, and studies of this nature have yet to be published. Take new recruits as an example again. Most militaries take recruits from a range of backgrounds, but our knowledge about the ways in which recruits relate their training to their prior background is still under-developed. That academies would deliberately relate their examination procedures to questions about the qualities of academy recruits was a self-evident proposal for military education reformers throughout the nineteenth century. It is currently subject to constraints on the availability of researchers with a specialist interest in student performance - the specialism is supported in the Netherlands and Belgian academies, while in the UK and the US such studies depend more on direction from interested parties responsible for studies in particular academies.

In many academies, the type of personal assessments that might provide evidence for such studies are more complicated than is normally attempted in seeking to inculcate the military's core values. This may be justified on the assumption that it is more important to present all candidates with core values in the same way than to identify the particular attitudes of officer candidates from distinctive backgrounds. Where educators have an interest, by contrast, they will know that in an increasing number of school education systems recruits will have been exposed to a succession of forms of participatory evaluation, making this a relatively straightforward addition for ethics courses in the academies and in training for the lower ranks. The commitment to this approach to evaluation is an investment in a learning style focused on character development through personal engagement and on the capacity to build effective relationships in professional contexts. The format may be more structured than the teacher-student relationships that were deemed central to educational reform in the nineteenth century academy, but the significance of this relationship for effective evaluation rests on similar intuitions about the challenges to character development and to its recognition in an institutional setting.

## **Conclusions**

Evaluations are deeply embedded in the bureaucracy with which military academies deliver high quality education. They are a core feature of the academy's historic attempts to identify their most able students. Examination systems have also been subject to repeated educational reforms aimed at reversing the social and institutional problems associated with military failure. This chapter has indicated that some of the more innovative evaluative frameworks used in the delivery of military ethics education, intended to serve this natural interest in fighting failure through educational reform, do provide a response to top-down processes of reform without necessarily engaging fully with changing educational realities and with developmental needs unique to individuals. Before rushing to assert the need for a joined-up approach to ethics education, it is worth recapping the distinct perspectives which create the scope for deploying evaluation tools in this way.

Ethics education as a spur to the development of long-term vocational commitments focuses teachers and students on individual decision making resources, practices and styles. This is pedagogically subjective in the sense that the teacher is focused on developing ideas and commitments in the student as a person. The burden of the educational experience is on the teacher-student relationship: at a minimum the teacher acts as a model whose integrity and credibility is important for the student's attitude to the proper application of ethics in their military service. A pedagogically subjective or person-centred approach is not necessarily ethically subjective, in the sense of conveying a relativist perspective in problem solving. Teaching methods and case studies may nevertheless be chosen for their effectiveness in developing appropriate student responses which highlight situations where there is no obvious or single right answer. To evaluate the effect of this vocational educational process on an individual implies attention to changes in personal attitude which are dependent

on a web of social relationships which affect an individual's relationship to their military career. To evaluate the formative effect such education has on military performance also requires a subjective approach to evaluation: beginning in the classroom with the teacher-student relationship, and following student experience through from pre-military life to service and deployment after graduation. Written examinations and feedback forms capture only a part of the educational process at stake. This was already a feature of nineteenth-century educational reforms: a teacher's perspective on a student should speak more directly to the interests of their institutions where the quality of student vocational achievements are concerned. The nineteenth century reformers saw the need to balance teacher's perspectives with external evaluation, as a check on the subjective judgements of a teacher and their institution (which might extend to prejudice and nepotism in a military judged to be failing).

A military seeking to change its performance in the light of very public ethical failures has an interest in this vocational dimension, but also in quick changes at a collective level, measured in other ways. In this context, the individual's conformity to collective commitments becomes urgent. Challenges are created by situations and the consequences of public failure. An external, objective form of evaluation accessible to the military hierarchy outside the classroom meets an essential part of the needs faced by militaries seeking to limit the potential for damaging ethics failures. As was recognised in the Canadian reforms, an external systematic form of review matches an essential part of the need to influence unit performance where the ethical capacities or behaviour of individual commanding officers is in doubt. Feedback mechanisms also become, in this framework, focused on objections that can be made on objective criteria, not on subjective judgements. As the Canadian experience also underlines, external reviewers can face significant challenges in seeking to gain the trust and perspective they need to represent the ethical preparedness of units and of individual officers accurately. The drive for a system to guarantee ethical standards depends on subjective factors which imply an investment in subjective forms of evaluation, whether these are conducted by educators or by outsiders conducting interviews and observing the educational process.

The present examination of problems and agendas for reform suggests a combination of evaluation methods and perspectives. Uncontroversial, in practice institutional pressures and resource stretch may mean it continues to be under-developed in most military education systems, and even in those making the largest investment in ethics reform. Combining methods requires negotiations, communications across insider-outsider boundaries, an awareness of subjective backgrounds, interests and sources of trust issues, and a broader sense of the ways in which external forces and evaluators are also implicated in an evaluation exercise. No single simple exercise will lead to an evaluation that captures all the challenges at stake, let alone that leads to a problem-proof ethics education system.

That notwithstanding, in positive, practical terms, this chapter presents an argument for the practical benefits of a renewed conversation based on evaluations from teachers, students, outsiders within the military, civilians with

a brief for reform and external researchers. perspectives could be of great practical benefit to the military today. The relationship between internal and external evaluators is an important one to take seriously. This can be described more clearly in terms of the limitations of each form of evaluation. The academic or outsider perspective can pick up much which internal reporting does not. Equally, much is lost where studies are constructed without a full immersion in the structures of the military and in the specific conditions of service in which individuals apply what they have learnt in the classroom. Evaluation in its more elaborate forms can be important in addressing the ambitious and often subtle expectations we place on ethics education in the military. Character development is a central objective of most ethics programmes, even where its nature is not agreed. Military educators know it is difficult to evaluate, particularly via any objectifying method. At the same time, we expect of ethics provision that it be sensitive to different approaches to practical decision-making in the contexts in which this is needed in the military. Here, a systematic response corresponding to the public challenges faced by militaries may increasingly be found in forms of evaluation in which members of the military engage in a participatory fashion, in a conversation and not through a simplified objective assessment alone.

In the overstretched or financially-straitened situation faced by many military academies, it is natural that time-intensive evaluations fall off the agendas of educators and their institutions. But precisely at a time where priorities are under review and ethics commitments require argument and reformulation, evaluations can prove one of the educator's greatest resources. An integrated approach to evaluation could prove to be one of the most significant motors behind the promotion of an effective, integrated discourse about professional ethics in military affairs beyond the academy.

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